

CIACO NID 81 [REDACTED]

October 03, 1981

USSR-POLAND-BERLIN: Skyjacking Problem

The evident Soviet desire to prevent hijacked Polish aircraft from landing in West Berlin raises potentially serious problems of air safety and the possibility of an international incident. The third Polish aircraft hijacked to West Berlin in as many months landed at the US airfield at Tempelhof on 18 September, despite blocking maneuvers by Soviet military fighters and helicopters. During the incident, Soviet helicopters also took up low-altitude positions over the approach beacons at the French and British airfields. [REDACTED]

The Soviet representative at a Berlin air controllers' meeting subsequently confirmed that the Soviets will use helicopters in any future hijacking to try to force the aircraft to land in East Germany. He stated such actions would be unnecessary if US authorities would return hijackers to Poland. Soviet anxieties probably have been heightened since 18 September by two unsuccessful attempts to hijack Polish commercial aircraft. [REDACTED]

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Approved for Release
Date 8/6/00

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